UNITED NATIONS **TD**

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.
GENERAL

TD/B/WP/127
10 July 2000

Original: ENGLISH

TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Working Party on the Medium-term Plan
and the Programme Budget
Thirty-sixth session
Geneva, 11-15 September 2000
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA *

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2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing

4. Review of the financial sustainability of certain technical cooperation programmes and activities, pursuant to paragraph 164 (viii) of the Plan of Action, in order to ensure sufficient funding

5. Implementation of paragraph 166 of the Plan of Action of UNCTAD X

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* As approved by the Working Party at the second part of its thirty-fifth session on 19 April 2000.

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6. Evaluation of technical cooperation programmes:

   (a) EMPRETEC

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II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1 - Election of officers

1. In accordance with rule 63 of the rules of procedure of the Trade and Development Board, the Working Party shall elect its own officers. Following the thirty-first session of the Working Party, and in accordance with the cycle of rotation, the Chairman at its thirty-sixth session shall be a representative of one of the States members in List C (Latin America and the Caribbean Group). The Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur shall be a representative of one of the States members in list B.

Item 2 - Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (TD/B/WP/127)

2. The provisional agenda for the thirty-sixth session of the Working Party as approved on 19 April 2000 appears in section I above. A note on the organization of work of the session will be circulated at the opening of the meeting.

Item 3 - Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing

3. The Working Party will consider two reports:

(a) The Report on technical cooperation activities undertaken in 1999, which is being submitted both to the Trade and Development Board at its forty-seventh session and to the Working Party at its current session, has three parts:

An overview of technical cooperation activities (TD/B/47/2- TD/B/WP/125)

4. This document provides data and information on developments in UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities, including prospects for the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources and cooperation between UNCTAD and other organizations. A brief analysis of the distribution of activities among countries, regions and programmes is also given. Furthermore, the report reviews activities in favour of the least developed countries. It reports on the secretariat efforts to enhance delivery of UNCTAD's technical cooperation services and finally provides information on cooperation between UNCTAD and the private sector. The report also includes information on the evaluation of technical cooperation programmes undertaken in 1999.

These courses would draw on the expertise and policy analysis work of the UNCTAD secretariat, with the support of an advisory body to be established by the Trade and Development Board. Courses on delivery, cooperation and coordination would be assured with relevant research and academic institutions and with other relevant international organizations, taking into consideration the commitment of UNCTAD to the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance for the LDCs. The organization of the courses should be financed from UNCTAD's existing regular budget resources and available extra-budgetary resources. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD is invited to submit detailed costed proposals to the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget".

12. A note on UNCTAD's capacity-building programme will be circulated to the Working Party with the information on the rationale for, and the objectives and content of, an UNCTAD capacity-building programme.

Item 6 - Evaluation of technical cooperation programmes:

(a) EMPRETEC

13. In the context of its annual consideration of an in-depth evaluation of a technical cooperation programme, the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget, at its thirty-fourth session held in September 1999, decided to review, at its session in the year 2000 dealing with technical cooperation, an in-depth evaluation of the EMPRETEC Programme. The evaluation report was prepared by an independent evaluation team composed of a professional evaluator with extensive experience in this area complemented by two additional members with a knowledge of the EMPRETEC programme, who were familiar with UNCTAD programmes and UNCTAD's programme planning and assessment procedures, and were constantly involved in the work of UNCTAD intergovernmental bodies. The latter were intended to bring into the evaluation process the perspective of both the beneficiary and the donor communities. The evaluation report is contained in document TD/B/WP/129.

(b) Follow-up to evaluations

(i) Competition law and policy

14. After considering the evaluation of the technical cooperation activities on competition law and policy (TD/B/WP/119), the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget, at its thirty-fourth session held in September 1999 "invited the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to report at the autumn session of the Working Party in the year 2000 on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the evaluation report". The relevant report prepared by the secretariat is contained in document TD/B/WP/130.

(ii) Trade Points

15. At its thirty-fourth session, the Working Party on the Medium-term Plan and the Programme Budget approved a three-year Trade Point Programme Strategy prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat (TD/B/WP/120). Following the consideration and adoption of the strategy, the Working Party requested the secretariat "to report to the autumn session of the Working Party in the year 2000 on progress in the implementation of the strategy, including on the work undertaken and to be undertaken, as well as on training activities for Trade Points in core services and on the strategy's financial aspects". It further requested the secretariat "to explore options for a suitable non-profit organization, including an international Trade Points federation, to manage the ETO system, taking into account the views of Trade Points worldwide on this issue, and to present these options to the Working Party for decision at the autumn session in the year 2000". UNCTAD X decided, in pragraph 158 of the Plan of Action, that "UNCTAD shall fully implement the Trade Point Programme stategy, as proposed by the secretariat in document TD/B/WP/120, including the transfer of the electronic trading opportunities system to a non-profit entity as soon as possible". In response to these requests, the Working Party will have before it for consideration document TD/B/WP/128.

Item 7 - Financing of experts from developing countries and economies in transition when participating in UNCTAD meetings

16. The General Assembly, in resolution 53/3 of 12 October 1998, agreed "to the use of the amount of US$1,088,000 for the expenses of experts attending, in their personal capacity, the expert meetings convened by the Trade and Development Board". Not all the funds were utilized during the biennium 1998-1999. Accordingly, the Assembly in Section XIV of resolution 54/251 of 23 December 1999 agreed that, "on an exceptional basis ....., the unspent balance [be] retained until all the activities and programmes outlined in the report of the Secretary-General of 13 May 1998 and approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/3 of 12 October 1998 are completed".

17. A report on the financing and participation of developing country experts in the seven expert meetings held in 1999 was provided to the twenty-second Executive session of the TDB (TB/B/EX(22)/2).

18. The Working Party will have before it a report on the financing and participation of experts in UNCTAD expert meetings held so far in 2000.

Item 8 - Provisional agenda for the thirty-seventh session of the Working Party

19. The UNCTAD secretariat will submit to the Working Party for its consideration a draft provisional agenda for its thirty-seventh session.

Item 9 - Other business

Item 10 - Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

20. The final report will be compiled under the authority of the Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur, taking into account the proceedings of the final (closing) plenary meeting, for submission to the Trade and Development Board.